Excerpts from the Journal of Joseph W. Musser Concerning Financial and Other Trials

1921

February 23, (Wed.) - Had a talk with Pres. Frank Y. Taylor regarding my case before the High Council. It seems I have broken faith with the "Woodruff Manifesto" and taken more wives than one. Many have done likewise, but some earlier than me. I am up before the High Council. I have 19 children, most of whom I am supporting, - the others taking care of themselves. I am serving about 70 meals a day and during this season of high cost of living! But they want my scalp, and will get it. Pres. Taylor is a Prince of a man - He is true blue, but the "system" demands my scalp and will get it. But I have done my best and I am not afraid of the outcome. God's law will prevail, I know it and TIME will prove it! I told Pres. Taylor I had no defense, but that the law of the Church must take its course. And so be it.

1922

March 21, (Tue.) - Received a long letter from my dear precious son Neil, in which he very bitterly criticizes my course in family matters, my treatment of his mother, and announces the fact that he has been a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church for three years. I am wounded to the heart. He has been such a wonderful son and a comfort to me. What will the end be? Banished by my Church, financially distressed, eighteen members of my family depending upon my efforts for a living, and now my children chiding me and blaming me for all the trouble that has come to me! My God, am I right or wrong? Thou knowest I have sought they guidance and have sacrificed in my devotion to the Gospel. What shall I so. Do thou be my guide and help me over the stony road and bring my children back to me and help us all to see alike and to accept thee as their guide. Keep Neil's heart from growing so hard that it cannot be softened and help us all to be virtuous, honest and to abide thy day.

August 3, (Thu.) - Am much worried over financial matters. My efforts seem to avail nothing. Have been reading my Patriarchal blessings. They are full of promises and encouragement. O, if I knew myself I do desire to serve the Lord. I am so filled with weaknesses and shortsightedness and faults. I sometimes think the Lord has fully rejected me, but I do love him and I do want to accomplish the mission for which I cam into the world. O, Lord my God, help me I pray thee. Bless me...

As thou hast blessed me with many wives and children, I pray that I may have their love, and the ability to provide for them proper necessities. I also pray they may have the gift of faith, that they may seek thee. I desire to be among thy sons who shall assist in bringing about the redemption of Zion and build the New Jerusalem in Jackson County, Missouri. I would like to fulfill that part of my blessing pertaining to my being a savior to many of my posterity as Joseph was in Egypt, that I might be able to assist my brethren during famine days that are coming. O, Lord, bless me with vision and understanding. Make each place for my foot to step and protect me from my enemies. Let me be at they feet forever. Let me save they people. Let me be a messenger for them - a door keeping at the door of they tent. Father close thine eyes, to my frailties and remember only that I love you and want to serve thee and keep they commandments.

Visit me O, Lord, and speak they will concerning me, and in my weakness and humility and littleness I will endeavor to answer. In the name of Jesus Christ I pray for thy blessing - Amen.

August 21, (Mon.) - Learnt that my wives Rose and Mary have both made statements of late reflecting on my integrity and indicating their utter lack of confidence in me, yet they are

straining every effort to get money from me for their support. Their misrepresentations are damaging to as it prevented me from doing business with certain people into whose ears the "rattle" of these women reach. I am in much the same position, of course on a smaller scale, but the principle is the same, as the Prophet Joseph Smith, when he crossed the river to come west, and escape the fury of the mobcrats, his friends, and especially his wife. Emma sent work intimating that he was a coward, demanding that he come back and face the music, etc. He came to his doom. So my wives instead of standing by me and sustaining me in the fullest extent, are forever depreciating my efforts and ability and causing, by their words and actions, other people to do likewise. They will wake up some day, but when it is too late to make proper amends. But their eternal exaltation will depend on my leadership and this situation they cannot get away from so long as I am faithful to the Lord. Thanks to the public and private utterances of such men as Pres. Heber J. Grant, Richard R. Lyman, James E. Talmage, John M. Whittaker, with my wives and some of my children. Some day they will be called to an accounting. The Lord shall decide between us.

August 30, (Wed.) - Also visited the Coyle "Dream Mine" for the first time. Tunnel in about 1700 ft. and as straight as an arrow. They have encountered no ore of consequence. I am informed that Bp. Coyle directs the mining operations through manifestations he receives in dreams. I am impressed that the mountains are filled with gold and sliver and other precious metals and when the Lord wants his people to have them, he will inspire certain ones to get them, but not until. Perhaps the parties now working there are the right ones. Had a very pleasant trip, returning home same day.

September 1, (Fri.) - Visited my wife Mary at the Farm. Found her very positive in her feelings that she should not continue living with me because of the counsel she has had from different monogamic sources. She says the Lord has taken from her love from me and she does not desire me to visit her in future, but of course should have perfect liberty to see the children and to support them. I told Mary that I still loved her and that I expected some day to lead her into the Celestial Kingdom of God. Poor girl. She is deluded. Her self righteous brothers, her prattling sister neighbors, her ward officials, some of the apostles, have lost no opportunity in trying to convince her that her life is wrong is plural marriage, and she is wavering. She cant endure the test. She looks for the plaudits of the populace. She said as long as I could go the stand [sic] pray and preach she loved me, but now that I am dropped and am not recognized by the Church authorities, she cant stand it. She must be with the popular side. She must feed on recognitions. She forgets that one of the authorities told her to stand by me. Poor girl. She has so many wonderful qualities too and she is a lovely girl. Heavenly Father take possession of her heart and lead her back to me. Teach her that trials are meant for a purpose and that they purify and ennoble; That only those who are purified as by fire will win the great reward; that her husband understands more of the situation than her neighbors and that she should follow him. Teach her that "If she would go with us, she must go against wind and tide, she must also own religion in his rags and well as when in his silver slippers, and stand by him too when bound in irons as well as when he walketh the streets with applause." O Lord bless her and our children that none of them will be lost. Amen.

What will be the penalty provided fore the men, especially those high up, whose words and actions are forever tending to separate families and lead them astray, by advising them that the Lord is not pleased with their lives in polygamy. My God! Not please with a woman who is willing to bring into the world six beautiful children and toil and labor for them, while all around her are women dressed in their silks and satins, who are murdering their offspring, and refuse to accept the responsibilities of motherhood, and yet who point the finger of scorn at her! And to think she should be influenced by such miserable trash, - many of them the whores and prostitutes of modern Israel! But such are the times. We must needs learn wisdom by the things we suffer.

March 19, (Mon.) - Many of the leading people have adopted the theory that since the Lord has blessed men with surgical ability, we should patronize them and not call upon the Lord for such blessings. I cannot accept the attitude, and since it simply means that in another way we have but faith in the Lord and the Gospel and prefer placing our trust in man. Presuming that the Doctors were honest and God fearing, we might place greater reliance in the skill of science. But the doctors are not honest. But few of them pretend to be. They are not God fearing. They glory in their own power. They lie and cheat. Charge extortionate prices. They grind the poor and generally diagnose cares in accordance with the their financial needs. all are not this dishonest and corrupt, but it is extremely difficult to distinguish between the good and the bad.

This too, many of our people cannot afford the expensive operations. If the Lord has ceased to care for his own, these poor devils are not and injured, while only the wealthy, who can pay for skill, are entitled to the blessings of the Lord. Bah - on such a damnable doctrine! God has spoken with promise and his people would do well to listen and obey. God never intended that his people should be cut to pieces. [At] the rate the people are now going, we will have no strong women to bear the children of men in the future in the next ten years. Doctors are removing most of the vitals of women weakening them for motherhood. They go through life weak, sallow, confusing perhaps mothers of one or two spindly children and that is the Doctrine of the day taught by the leading brethren and sisters crooks and Bishops, while God says "If there are any sick among you, let them call for the elders, and they will anoint them and the prayers of the faith shall heal the sick." But if any among you have not the faith to be healed, let them be nourished in all tenderness with useful herbs and that not administered by the hands of an enemy (for personal financial gain - nor should they be [off to the doctor] for every simple pain).

April 8, (Sun.) - The winding up scene is near at hand and the Lord will cut his work short in righteousness in order that all flesh shall not be destroyed, for at the * the people are flocking into the ways of babylon now, unless checked by the power of God in a few year there will be no faith left in the earth and Satan's rule would triumph; But God will not permit it. So stand in Holy places...

May 24, (Wed.) - Grandma Shipp told me she heard Brigham Young say that the "time would come when men wanted only have to wish themselves at certain distant places and they would be there," the element of time and the laws of gravity being practically overcome. This confirms what I have been entertaining for some time. I believe in the idea.

Quite a furor is being caused in church circles by action of authorities in changing the design of the Garment - short arms and legs and low necks. Since, as I understand it, the garment is only a symbol, it matters little about these details which are less important than the inconvenience of having long sleeves to bother in the warm summer weather. My idea is that even * suits may be worn as garments provided they have proper marks. The symbol must be maintained, while the garment itself may be changed to keep pace with the change in dress, just as men once wore beards, but are now going shaven, and women once wore veils but are now bare of face.

September 11, (Tue.) - Wife Mary having another severe attack of gall stones and stomach disorder. Poor girl is suffering intensely. In entering the sick room I find several members of the family dishing out consolation about as follows":

"Well mame must resort to the knife after this." "Look at M? since her operation, she can work hard and is not troubled any more except she has hurried head aches." "There's Chil. Miller, he was so bad he was taken to hospital at night now he is a real man..." "If Mame gets over this spell, she must go under operation." etc. etc. etc. And such bunk at the bed in a sick room in the 20th century, and among supposedly enlightened people! I am not afraid of my enemies, but God save me from my friends and from my wife's relatives.

1923

September 13, (Thu.) - Hales in from Sp. Fork for medical treatment. Doctors took X-ray $30.00 and advised operation to cut new hole in his stomach. He acted my advice. Told him I that the old hole good enough if cleaned out a little and I took him to Dr. Greenhalgh for a thorough cleaning before resorting to the butchers and slaughterhouse. My God, but how I am opposed to the tactics of the thieving M.D.s and their ungovernable tendency to want to jab the knife into every body that presents itself. If the people would get back to first principles. Go to the Lord, live consistent, rely on mild herb remedies, it would not be long before every mother's son of a Doctor would have to seek the words and work for a living or starved. The outrages, wonders, etc. committed in the name of medical science are appalling and are becoming a social menace that will [destroy] the race in time, if not checked by some great power.

1926

August 16, (Mon.) We are desperately in need of financial help on our Diamond Fork Well. The assessment is not coming in fast and we had so many debts to take care of, we are again short. What a struggle it is. Little do the stockholders know of our worry and grief and in the very nature of things we cannot tell them as they will not fully understand. I am only an instrument in the hands of the Lord and whatever His will may be I hope to accomplish it. I hope to have strength to meet every condition and every purpose of our Father.

1928

February 25, (Sat.) - John T. Clark told me in name of the Lord, it was my mission to assist the Church in its financial policies in the future. Am much concerned over the poor people. Want to help them. So many need a little lift and *. I hope and pray it may be my good fortune to help them get started.